

NEWS RELEASE



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact: Alex Peabody
(831) 649-7132
(831) 402-7805

State Park Lifeguard Swim Tests

Testing for the Best!

The California State Park Lifeguard Program begins its annual swim tests this weekend for both its returning seasonal lifeguard staff and for the brave hopefuls trying out for a seasonal lifeguard job on a State Beach this summer, State Park officials said today.

Beginning at 9 a.m. Saturday (February 26, 2005) at the Huntington State Beach Lifeguard Headquarters seasonal lifeguards will enter the surfline to test their mettle in the turning waters off the California coast. Ocean tests will be also conducted weekends throughout March at selected State Beaches. Lake testing will be conducted in March, April and May.

"We strongly believe in testing our lifeguards in the very waters that they will be making rescues in," said Alex Peabody, State Parks' Aquatic Safety Specialist. "Each year we require our returning lifeguards to make a 1,000 yard open water swim in 20 minutes or less."

Recruits who are trying out must not only make the 1,000 yard swim, but they are immediately timed in a 200-yard run, 400-yard swim, and a 200-yard swim with a time limit of 10 minutes.

If they make it through this competitive, physical testing process, recruits are then invited to an oral interview. Ranked according to their interview, the top candidates earn a seat at the California State Park Lifeguard Training Program. This is an eight-day, 80 hour program where they are instructed in advanced first aid, resuscitation, rescue and emergency procedures. In addition, every day they have to complete their "daily vitamin" -- a physical test involving any combination of running and swimming in the ocean.

"You might call it lifeguard bootcamp," said Peabody. "Our lifeguard Instructors are no nonsense veterans who have no problem telling a 'rookie' that they don't have what it takes to be an ocean lifeguard. There is simply too much at stake."

According to Peabody, California State Lifeguards made more than 10,000 water rescues along California State Park beaches, lakes, and reservoirs in calendar year 2004. Despite more than 40 million visitors to the parks with developed lifeguard programs, there was not one drowning in water where there was a State Park Lifeguard on-duty, he said. There are more than

85 million visitors to the California State Parks system each year. "It is tragic that in waters where there was no lifeguard service, there were 36 drownings last year in State Parks," said Peabody. "In the culture of lifeguards, even one drowning is one too many."

"That is why we train the way we do. We want the best to be out there protecting the public on our beaches," Peabody said.

Information on Swim Tests for California State Park Lifeguards:

OCEAN TESTING DATES AND LOCATIONS:

Huntington State Beach	Saturday, February 26, 2005	9:00 am
San Buena Ventura State Beach	Sunday, March 6, 2005	9:00 am
Rio Del Mar State Beach	Saturday, March 12, 2005	9:00 am
South Carlsbad State Beach	Sunday, March 13, 2005	9:00 am
Point Mugu State Park	Saturday, March 19, 2005	9:00 am
San Clemente State Beach	Saturday, March 19, 2005	9:00 am
Monterey State Beach	Saturday, March 26, 2005	9:00 am

LAKE TESTING DATES AND LOCATIONS:

Millerton Lake State Recreation Area	Saturday, March 26, 2005	10:00 am
Moreno Beach, Lake Perris	Saturday, March 19, 2005	9:00 am
Moreno Beach, Lake Perris	Sunday, April 17, 2005	9:00 am
Granite Bay, Lake Folsom	Sunday, May 15, 2005	9:00 am

For further information on what is required to become a lifeguard, visit the California State Park website at: <http://www.parks.ca.gov/> and click on JOBS. You may also contact specific California State Park areas at the following:

San Diego County, South	619-435-0126
San Diego County, North	760-438-2675
Orange County, South	949-366-8592
Orange County, North	714-536-1454
Los Angeles County, South	310-457-2585
Los Angeles County, North	805-488-7844
Ventura County	805-648-3321
Santa Barbara County	805-968-3834
Monterey County	831-649-2976
Santa Cruz County	831-427-4868
Russian River Area	707-865-2391
Southern California Lakes / Reservoirs	951-940-5600
Northern California Lakes / Reservoirs (Folsom Area)	916-988-0205 Ext. 247
Northern California Lakes / Reservoirs (Millerton Area)	559-822-2332

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